

BALLET

Today

6 SHILLING



APRIL 1955

MARGOT FONTEYN

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Cover Portrait

MARGOT FONTEYN IN FIREBIRD

Houston Rogers

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Ballet Today on behalf of its readers, congratulates Margot Fonteyn on her marriage and wishes her every future happiness.

MARGOT FONTEYN occupies a unique place in ballet in this country, and in the affections of the British ballet public. Not only is she the first flowering of the English "school" and its ambadress abroad, but as an artist and as an individual she has come to represent all that the public expects in a great ballerina.

By her art, in which her range as actress and virtuoso has been unequalled since Karsavina, she has shown the world that the English "school" can produce a ballerina great by international standards. As a person, she is essentially modest and sincere, and she enjoys a popularity in the Sadler's Wells Company which survives the testing atmosphere of classroom and rehearsal, and is quite apart from the admiration all dancers feel for a great artist.

On February 6th 1955 she was married to Dr. Roberto Arias, Panamanian Ambassador to the Court of St. James, whom she had first met seventeen years before at Oxford. On the eve of her wedding she received an ovation from a crowded theatre, and was astonished to find herself moving in a shower of confetti, while rose petals fell from overhead. The confetti had been successfully concealed in the hands of her fellow dancers until her final entry in *Daphnis and Chloe*. The next morning, in bright sunshine, she flew to Paris for the ceremony at the Panamanian Consulate, where relatives and a few close friends awaited her. The British Ambassador, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, and Dame Ninette de Valois were among the witnesses. She had hoped for a quiet wedding, but batteries of press photographers dispelled this illusion. The small room was decorated with lilacs, roses and carnations, and the bride looked enchanting in a taffetta ballet-length dress of silver-grey by Dior, her favourite designer. She wore on her dark hair a half-circlet of kingfisher feathers.

After their short honeymoon, cruising in the Bahamas, the bridal pair returned to London: he to take up his ambassadorial appointment, and she to dance before the Queen at Covent Garden on the 25th of February.

After the performance, there was a champagne party in a marquee erected on the stage. This was the first time the stage had been used for a private event, and the guests were the ballet company, the orchestra and the entire theatre personnel. It was a very happy occasion, and all present re-echoed the feelings which Senora Arias had expressed from the stage the night before the wedding: the hope that she would be as happy in her future life as she had been with the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

Pigeon Crowle

Editor - ESTELLE HERF

Below, Jorge-Tulio Royo, the Panamanian Consul, slips the ring on Margot Fonteyn's finger. Dr. Arias is on her left, and behind her is Sir Gladwyn Jebb. (Associated Press photo).



ANTONIO

and his Spanish

Ballet



Antonio, a drawing by Zita Mazza

SO much has been written about Antonio in the past, yet I can only find one adjective to describe him—he is *fantastic*; everything about him is larger than life, his dancing, his costumes, his behaviour both on and off stage. He is the public's idol for he has that star quality which causes the theatre to play nightly to capacity. The gangways are stifled with the Antonio blend of bobby-soxers, who although perhaps not so vociferous and tearful as those of a Mr. Johnnie Ray are, in their own way, equally enthusiastic in their worship.

Although the show is Antonio's, he has introduced three young dancers, Carmen Rojas, Antonio De Ronda and Paco Ruiz, who have greatly abetted the strength of the company, all three achieved individual successes.

The suite of Basque Dances which ended the first half of the programme was colourful in the extreme, the costumes being superbly designed, although perhaps their boots were a trifle over ornamental.

One of the most exciting dances of the evening was the *Seguiryas Gitanas*, Antonio's solo which has become both legendary and the accustomed climax of the evening; his feet rapping out the staccato rhythm with the speed and precision of a machine-gun. Rosita Segovia, with a personality as unlike Antonio as chalk from cheese, remained a worthy backbone of the company.

Due to the National characteristics of many of the dances, it is essential that a colourful atmosphere should be maintained yet Antonio's company has little scenery, his effects being almost entirely achieved by the costumes and to a very great extent by the skilful use of lighting; a fact which English companies might do well to bear in mind.

V.C.

in *Le Lac*

des *Cygnés*

IT was an eager audience that awaited the first performance of Svetlana Beriosova in the dual role of Odette-Odile at Covent Garden (several weeks earlier she had made her debut in the role as a guest artiste in Belgrade).

Her second act was one of the loveliest spectacles we have witnessed this season; her complete serenity and technical composure at what must have been a significant moment in her life was a delight to behold; her Odette was a regal creation, a swan with authority, yet it was a graceful interpretation, her ports de bras the very essence of loveliness.

In the third Act as Odile her characterisation was what one might have expected; it was haughty yet there was a stamp of fundamental physical attraction about it.

Unfortunately the technical assurance lapsed for an instant in the execution of the thirty-two fouettes, but this was no doubt only one of those mishaps which will happen on first nights.

John Field was an admirable partner, yet for his entrance in the coda in the third Act, his facetious expression is completely incongruous and alien to the role.

V.C.

YUGOSLAV BALLET

AT THE STOLL

FROM every point of view, the season of ballet provided by the Yugoslav company from Zagreb at the Stoll was refreshing and culturally important. The settings alone were an inspiration and demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt the superiority of the continental 'graded' stage, on which the dancers performed with practised ease. As an aid to atmosphere, with very simple scenic aids, its possibilities were most impressive.

The Gingerbread Heart, by our standards, was a mere trifle, with a very thin story rather too blatantly padded. Only two of the dancers, Sonia Kastl and Slatka Stephan, had opportunities to display their skill in the classical tradition, and did what was required of them neatly

enough. The pantomimic scene in the second part, where the various gingerbread figures come to life, was somewhat static and lacked variety, not even the equestrian interlude with which it ended providing any real thrill. But the colour, the gay costumes, and the general joie de vivre redeemed the entertainment and made it an entirely satisfying, unforgettable experience, with Nenad Lhotka outstanding for his virile, athletic masculinity.

The Devil in the Village and *Romeo and Juliet* were reviewed in the March *BALLET TODAY*, and the musical aspect of the Company's season is discussed by Montague Calman elsewhere in this issue.

E.C.

NEWS FROM GERMANY

PARIS REVIEW

HUNGARIAN BALLET TRIUMPHS

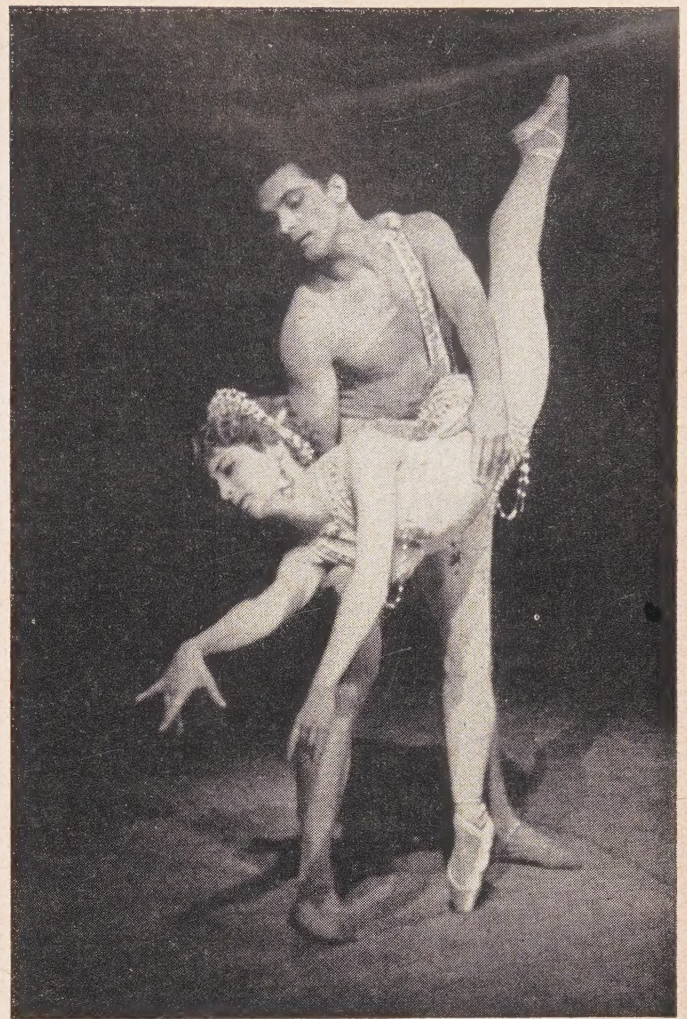
THE Hungarian Ballet, the popular Hungarian song and dance group at the Théâtre de l'Empire, achieved a total success for its 130 artists, dancers, singers and musicians. The press was unanimous in its perfectly merited praise.

This young group was founded in 1950 and made its first public appearance in 1951. Its members were selected by a committee composed of members of the Institute of Folklore Art, all artists and connoisseurs of art. The famous composer and expert on popular music, Zoltan Kodaly, has composed some of his best works for the group. When the Soviet choreographer Igor Moiseyev was in Hungary he rehearsed the company and helped them with his experience. The choir of 45 artists give popular melodies which blend well with the dances and the music. Among others I admired the Kallo pas de deux, transcribed and harmonised by Zoltan Kodaly. Certain melodies are the work of Bela Bartok inspired by popular themes. A typical orchestra, directed by Gabor Baros, accompanies the ballets and renders the fragments of Hungarian music. Nearly all the ballets were produced by Miklos Rabai and are inspired by the rich Hungarian folklore. The dance with spurs, given by men, violent and with a wild rhythm, evokes the south Hungarian plain. The bottle dance is given by girls in wonderful old costumes, who execute with a smile the most complicated steps, while balancing full bottles on their heads. The chair dance, given by masked men, and the gypsy dance were acclaimed. But the entire programme of the Hungarian Ballet completely captured the sympathy and admiration of Parisian audiences.

CRANKO AT OPERA

Yvette Chauviré was due to appear at the Opera at the end of March in a ballet with choreography by John Cranko based on Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*.

The René Blum Prize has been awarded by the Association of Writers and Critics on the Dance to Mlle. Francine Collement, petit sujet of the Opera. This prize is intended to assist young, up and coming dancers. Parisian critics have been noticing Mlle. Collement in the performances at the Opera and above all at the last examinations, when she was brilliant and passed at the head of the petits sujets.



Dora Csinady and Janos Osi in Bihari's Song, a new work in the repertoire of the Hungarian Ballet. On this page Ferdinand Reyna tells of the company's triumphant season in Paris.

Slim and well proportioned, with an exceptional ballon and magnificent elevation, Mlle. Collement's work is well executed and finished. A petit sujet does not often have an opportunity at the Opera to show her expressive qualities, but several evenings of ballet outside the Opera have given us the chance to judge her capabilities.

The prize for academic dance at the annual congress of the Association of the French Stage was awarded this year to Mlle. Monique Vermot, pupil of Maestro Grazioso Cecchetti.

NEW LIFAR WORK

In February the Opera presented a new Lifar ballet, *Les Noces Fantastiques*, in two acts and four tableaux lasting about an hour. The music is by Marcel Delannoy, decor by Roger Chastel, costumes by Andre Levasseur, and the principal dancers are Nina Vyroubova, Peter van Dijk, and Claude Bessy, dancing respectively the

Fiancée, Captain Yannick and the Queen of the nymphs. This ballet was first commissioned from the composer, Delannoy, in 1941. The story concerns the courtship of Captain Yannick and Genevieve. Their engagement is celebrated before the Captain's ship leaves for foreign parts. When the ship is gone, a fortune teller warns Genevieve. The ship is wrecked and the sirens try to seduce Yannick. At home, preparations are going on for the wedding of Genevieve and Yannick, and the return of his ship is awaited. The Captain arrives, but he seems troubled by ghosts, and ultimately takes Genevieve back with him to the land beneath the sea.

One can listen to the music of this ballet without boredom. The interpreters of the ballet are excellent and the choreography, without being very original, is quite good. The decor is not astonishing, but the costumes are more beautiful.

Ferdinand Reyna

MUNICH

ALAN Carter's first choreography for the State Opera Ballet in Munich fulfilled all expectations, and received an enthusiastic reception from press and public. Besides excerpts from *Swan Lake* and *Casse Noisette*, Carter presented two of his own works, *Vier Mal Vier*, to Ravel's "Tombeau de Couperin", admirably arranged with some delightful variations, and *The Miraculous Mandarin* to music by Bartok. Here Natascha Trofimova displayed her vigour and vitality and her outstanding personality. Paul Wunsch as the Mandarin, and Franz Baur and Heino Hallhuber all gave excellent performances. The decor and costumes by Werner Schachteli were superb.

HAMBURG

Helga Swedlund, ballet mistress of the Opera, will retire at the end of the season and concluded her work with the choreography of *The Devil in the Village*. This ballet was originally staged by Yugoslav Pino Mlakar, whose version was recently seen in London, and various other choreographers have made ballets on the Lhotka score. Miss Swedlund's ideas are not especially important, but the farewell performance was much appreciated by the audience and the soloists Erica Lihn, Irene Strebe, Herbert Yuzek and Heinz Schmiedel had great success. Miss Swedlund's successor is Hans Macke from the theatre in Zurich.

A programme of Stravinsky works was given recently, all to choreography by Herbert Freund. In *Le Renard* Freund himself was remarkable as the Cock and played the part so humorously that the ballet might well be named after his role.

In *Histoire d'un Soldat* Otti Tenzel, guest ballerina from the Stuttgart State Opera, again danced the princess. It was a good, but not a great, performance and former presentations are still in my memory.

Eva Bulow

EXAMINATION FEVER

Prevention is Better than Cure

says David Benn

AT the end of every Academic year the press becomes filled with accounts of student suicides and people of standing write to 'The Times' claiming that examinations are not a true test of knowledge. As far as I know the examinations of the R.A.D. and other bodies have not, as yet, resulted in the suicide of any prospective candidate even though they have come perilously near at times to driving harassed teachers to the mass murder of doting parents and temperamental pupils.

TEST OF NERVES

As some educationalists suggest again and again, examinations come to be rather a test of nerves than of actual knowledge. For this reason the student who spends all his time poring over his books has equal, if not greater, chances of failure than the student who spends the greater part of his time on the sports field, or in his College Dance Hall or both. Moreover, it is the emotionally pliable young dancer, highly strung and sensitive to atmosphere, who may be regarded as the potential ballerina. Yet it is just this type of girl, or boy for that matter, who is most likely to be affected by 'examination nerves'!

STAGE FRIGHT

In defence of examinations it has been suggested that the dancer whose nerves will not stand up to an examination will certainly be ill equipped to make a stage appearance. Could anything be further from the truth? Even stars would confess attacks of 'stage fright' and I have known dancers of the utmost competence almost faint in the wings through nervousness, and then go on stage and give a brilliant performance. If the thought of appearing in what must be for the dancer ideal surroundings, before a largely sympathetic audience, affects them to this extent, what must be the effect of appearing in a probably bare room before a comparatively unsympathetic examiner?

DOTING PARENTS

Nor is it only the dancers' nerves which suffer: this system of dance education threatens her entire appreciation of her art. From the age of seven children are educated to pass examinations with possibly no better motive than to satisfy the desires of doting parents to show off their child's certificates to various similarly doting uncles, aunts and other relations. For this reason or possibly because the next door neighbour's girl is taking the same examination, notorious 'ballet mamas' all over the country insist on forcing their children into examinations for which they are nowhere near ready; often against the wishes of their teacher. If some brave teacher were to obey what must be the dictates of her conscience in this matter, and to refuse point blank to enter the pupil concerned, there would be but one result. Mother would take her daughter to a more co-operative teacher. The only remedy would be for all teachers to unite in such a refusal, and this seems hardly practicable. I was tactless enough to suggest this as an ideal to a ballet teacher, to whom I will refer as Miss X, and was coldly informed that she had to make a living. In reply to this I can only remind her that ballet is an art and it is usual for artists, even in the supposedly materialistic 20th century, to work primarily for the love of their art. If it is a comfortable living which Miss X seeks I question the ethics of looking for it in ballet.

SPECIAL TALENT

A further result, as in the case of all examinations, is that the pupil's education tends to be governed almost entirely by the syllabus, and anything outside of that syllabus is considered of secondary importance. The effects of this are twofold. Firstly from an early age many children show a special talent for a particular section of the dance, possibly, for example, mime or the dances of one particular nation. Such natural talents are surely worth developing to the full, and while I would in no way underestimate the indispensability of an all round knowledge of the dance, it is difficult to see how one can develop the pupil's own special talent when one must

of necessity concentrate on the things she must know for the impending examination.

TECHNIQUE ONLY

The other result is that the impressionable girl, or boy, will inevitably come to conceive of those steps she is learning as an achievement required of her by the examiners. Technique rather than art becomes the end. Is it possible, unless she is born with that highly developed sense of the aesthetic, which is all too rarely inherited, but which most people can acquire under the right guidance, that she will be able to grasp in such circumstances anything of the historical and artistic import of the steps she is dancing? The dancer becomes not a thinker but a technician.

On the subject of a provincial ballet club's recent show, a retired dancer, a veteran of the days of Diaghilev, threw up her hands and cried with all the horror which only a continental accent can express "My dear, it was terrible. They looked as if they were hating every minute of it".

Nor is this examination-mindedness limited only to the amateur dancer. About two years ago there appeared in 'The Stage' an announcement regarding auditions for prospective members of a new ballet company, with the proviso that applicants should be of Advanced R.A.D. standard. Besides the fact that this qualification seemed a rather high one to demand, it is surely not a satisfactory indication of the use the applicant is going to be to a company. There are not a few dancers of standing who claim, with a certain amount of pride, that they have never passed an examination in their lives.

TALENT MUST COUNT

Miss X reminds me that in any profession some qualification will usually be required of an applicant before he can hope to be appointed. My reply to this is again that ballet is an art and

that by a long standing tradition the only qualification required of an artist is talent. It is only an industry which demands certificates of qualification. There can surely be no justification for breaking with this tradition now when it has so recently been found entirely impracticable to regulate entry into the theatrical profession.

Surely there are other means of warding off the hosts of unsuitable applicants who would otherwise throng the audition rooms of every ballet company. For example could an audition not be granted on the recommendation of the prospective dancer's teacher? It seems unlikely that favouritism would influence many teachers. Any teacher with a measure of business ability would see at once that nothing could be more against her own interests, and the reputation of her school, than to push forward a mediocre dancer or to hold back a promising one for the sake of her own personal prejudices.

ABOLISH EXAMS?

The art of ballet as a whole would not lose, and I suggest would profit in many ways by an abolition of examinations, except perhaps for those who intend to teach and therefore require a rather more specialised knowledge of dance technique; or at the very least in considerably less importance being attached to them. Some of the time left when there is no longer a rush to get pupils through examinations, might well be devoted to helping at least the promising pupils to appreciate something of the significance of the steps they are learning. The pupils would join a ballet company much the better for this elementary grounding in the aesthetics of their art. Nor would there be many repetitions of a recent incident, when my native tactlessness led me to ask a girl enthusing about the Galliard she had just learned, if she knew where it came from. "Out of Miss X's red book" she replied at once.

I believe it is a red book in which the R.A.D. syllabus is published. Really, Miss X! and to think you have been described as "the pillar of local ballet."

Paris

Annual Examinations

THE National Academy of Music and Dance counts among its most worthy traditions and one of the most important and spectacular, that of conducting annual examinations for the ballet company. It is necessary to explain that the grades of corps de ballet, soloist and ballerina which are used in other ballet companies are not employed at the Opera. The new recruit becomes a member of the second quadrille; there is an examination for promotion to the first quadrille; further examinations for promotion to choryphée, petit sujet, grand sujet and finally premier danseur. The étoiles (stars of the company) are chosen, without examination, from among the premiers danseurs.

NO APPLAUSE

The examination is held, with great pomp, on the stage of the Opera before a board of examiners composed of principal personalities of the theatre and a number of étoiles chosen by the candidates. The dancer has to perform a variation composed by, and another chosen by, the teacher. The audience is composed of parents and friends, pupils of the dance school, journalists, and outside dancers. Applause is forbidden and the dancers' efforts are rewarded by a most disconcerting silence. The small voice of Mr. Lehmann, Administrator the Opera, alone directs the proceedings.

The first act of this tragedy takes place outside the office of the concierge, where at eight o'clock in the morning gather the young girls and men, looking somewhat grey. They have not generally slept very well. Then the examiners arrive and Mlle. Zambelli, who carries well her sixty years at the Opera, completes the cortege.

DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

The examiners sit in solitary state in the orchestra stalls. The public use the seats in the balcony and circles (except those too near the stage). The usher announces: "Second quadrille. Mlle. Guillot's class." The class marches on stage, and then each dances in turn. Inexperienced, battling with the appalling floor of the stage, each of these favoured but unhappy girls does her best.

"First quadrille. Mlle. Lamballe's class." Mlle. Lamballe's teaching methods are not without qualities. She corrects many errors but despite this has

Jacqueline Rayet, whose disappearance made headline news in the national press recently. After a few days she walked into a police station on the Riviera, saying that she had run away because of her disappointment at not being promoted to premiere danseuse after this year's examinations at the Paris Opera.

faults of placing, the carriage of the back and shoulders.

"Petits sujets. M. Aveline's class." The appallingly difficult steps of the variation made certain étoiles go pale.

ITALIAN TRADITION

"Grands sujets. Mlle. Zambelli's class." The name of Mlle. Zambelli conjures up at least three generations of memories. She has maintained at the Opera the style which she learned from her masters, in particular Cesare Coppini with whom she made her debut at the Scala, Milan, in her extreme youth. Her pupils bear the marks of a school that has been preserved intact throughout all the evolutions and progress made by the art and technique of the dance.

OLD FASHIONED METHODS

The unsatisfactory methods by which the classifications are made would be too well known for me to mention them here, if it were not for the most unfortunate incident which took place this year. The examiners placed Mlle. Jacqueline Rayet second in the class of Grands Sujets and she should therefore have been promoted to premiere danseuse, but the management considered her too young at present. After the examination Mlle. Rayet disappeared, and on her return some days later was reported to have said that she ran away because of her disappointment at the result of the examination. M. Lehmann has stated that Mlle. Rayet was to be promoted to premiere danseuse in October.

Once more, here is proof that the Paris Opera examinations have no value. Why not do away immediately with this useless and grotesque parade and replace it by a permanent study of the work of the artists, on stage and in the classroom, by several neutral observers who have no interest in the ballet at the Opera but are both competent and just.

Jean Coquelle



New Faces at the Opera

Vaussard makes Progress

The present intense activity at the Opera would perhaps make it appropriate to speak of the principal performers. Liane Daydé has just left to dance in the U.S.A., where she will create some charming roles in commercial films. Most of her roles have been passed to Christiane Vaussard who is making great progress. At one time I had serious doubts of her possibilities, but it seems that since then she has worked hard and has accomplished miracles. Courage, mademoiselle, no one will be happier than I if you prove my previous criticisms to be wrong. Michel Renault, more serious than before, may well become an ideal danseur noble. He is not far from a technical and artistic maturity that will make him our greatest dancer, although he is already great. Peter van Dijk could have dazzled us; he had everything with which to accomplish this, a short time ago. Alas, he only shone at the end of his performance. He would do well to strive after a little more elevation, his leaps seem very small on such

a large stage. For this it is necessary for him to acquire the better placing of his heels on the ground. Also his right ankle bone is rather turned-in. Two fundamental faults which look very wrong in the numerous classical productions in which he has appeared up till now.

Jean Coquelle

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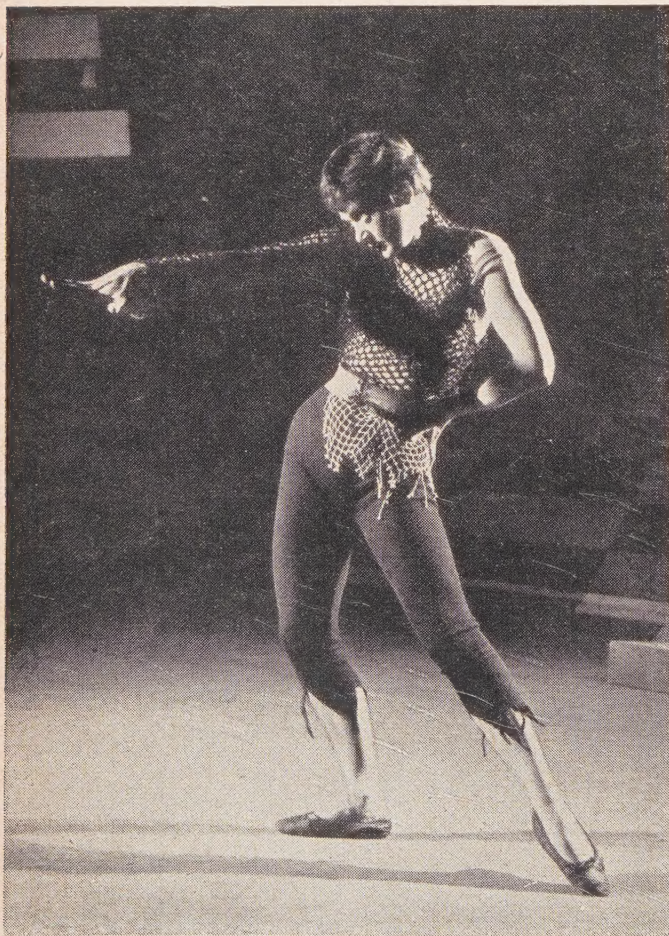
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"DANCE: its contribution to the life of communities" is the theme of a conference course organised by the National Association of Organisers and Lecturers in Physical Education at Ilkley from April 1st to 7th. The course will be in two parts, firstly the study of dance in different cultures by means of lectures, films and demonstration; secondly practical classes in various forms of dance suitable for inclusion in primary, secondary or further education. Lecturers will include **Dame Ninette de Valois** on classical ballet, **Douglas Kennedy** on folk dance, **Rudolf Laban** on modern dance, **Imogen Holst** on music and dance, and **Phyllis Haylor** on ballroom dancing.

JANET CRANMORE is well known to our readers in Birmingham, where she has her school of Russian Ballet. What may not be known is that her great grandfather, **John Brandard**, was a very well known engraver in the 19th century. His lithographs of famous dancers of the romantic period are greatly prized by present day collectors. Many dancers will be familiar with his pictures of **Grisi** in *La Peri*, the *Pas de Quatre*, and of **Lucille Grahn**, **Jules Perrot** and many others.



His address is 100, Church Street, Enfield.

BOURNEMOUTH Ballet Club is presenting the first performance of a new three-act ballet by **Felicity Gray** at the New Royal Theatre, Bournemouth on March 29th, and repeating the performance on the four following nights, with a matinee on April 2nd. The fact that **Miss Gray** and **Mr. Raymond Holder**, the concert pianist, have discovered and put together practically unknown **Tchaikovsky** music for the ballet, is causing a stir in the musical world. All the music was written for the piano and most of it has never been published outside Russia. **Mr. Holder** has recorded the music for rehearsals and hopes to play for the performances.

KISMET, **Jack Hylton's** latest musical production, opens at the Stoll this month. **Jack Cole** is dance director. For rehearsing the corps de ballet he wears a white Indian tight fitting costume together with bells, which he finds most useful as "pace makers" for the girls.

PIGEON CROWLE'S "CAREER OF MOIRA SHEARER" *Ballet Today* December has led new readers to enquire whether we have published other career stories by this author.

MAY issue 1954 featured **Violetta Elvin** and November **Nicholas Beriozoff**. Copies of both issues are still available from this office.

FESTIVAL Ballet's nineteen week tour of Canada and the United States have resulted in a loss of £16,000. The company earned £316,000 but the high cost of employing an American symphony orchestra and American stage hands proved a serious drain on finance.

CAMILLE de Rhynal is the organiser of Gala Performances at the Casino Municipal and Palais de la Mediterranee, Nice, which were to take place on the 28th and 31st March. *La Rose Enchantee* a new ballet by **Mons. de Rhynal**, will be produced for the first time.

We hope to publish photographs of this in our next issue.

BUTLINS are holding another Juvenile Dancing Festival this

Left: **Natascha Trofimova**, prima ballerina of the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, as she appears in **Alan Carter's** new ballet, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, which is reviewed by **Eva Bulow** on page 5.

Aisle

A COMMENTARY ON

year, at their Holiday Camp at Filey. The British Junior and Senior Ballet Championships will be held during the week August 27th-September 10th.

THE Pushkin Club, which as one might gather from its title takes an interest in anything Russian, has lectures every Friday on different aspects of Russian art, music, theatre and religion. **Tamara Karsavina** spoke in February on "Recollections" and on March 4th **Svetlana Beriosova** gave a talk entitled "My Life in Ballet". Anyone interested in the club should write to Academy House, 24, Kensington Park Gardens, W.11.

THE Greek National Ballet, directed by **Madame Dora Straton**, gave a season at the Theatre des Champs Elysees, Paris in March. The company, which is under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Frederica of Greece, comprises 35 actors, dancers, singers and musicians with characteristic instruments, such as viols, lyres, etc., and possesses splendid authentic costumes.

PIGEON Crowle's *Tales from the Ballet*, reviewed in **BALLET TODAY** in January 1954, is being reprinted. It is published by **Faber & Faber** at 12/6d.

FRANKLIN White is to give a course of eight lecture-demonstrations on the basic technique of ballet at Morley College, Westminster Bridge Road, S.E.1 during the summer term. The lectures, which are designed to increase the layman's understanding of the art, will be on Wednesday evenings commencing at the end of April.

BALLET TODAY offers its warmest congratulations to **Philip J. S. Richardson, O.B.E.**, Editor of *The Dancing Times* since its foundation in 1910, who celebrated his eightieth birthday on March 17th. A dinner was held in his honour at the Savoy Hotel to mark the occasion.

seat

IE BALLET MONTH

THE Association of Ballet Clubs presented an evening of ballet at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre on March 19th, too late to be reviewed in this issue. Ballets were performed by the R.A.D. Production Club (choreography by **John Cranko**) the Lewisham Theatre Ballet Club, the Phoenix Ballet Group from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Burton-on-Trent (St. Modwen's) Ballet Club. **Beryl Goldwyn** and **Alexander Bennett** appeared as guest artists. A general meeting of the Association was held on the same day at 3.15 p.m.

SADLER'S Wells School will take about a hundred residential students commencing with the September term. These will be accommodated in the beautiful White Lodge in Richmond Park, which was of course recently taken over by the school.

EN AVANT is the title of a small ballet magazine we have just received from New Zealand. It is painstakingly done in duplicated form with a few not very good sketches, and contains reviews of the **Borovansky** productions given during the company's visit to Auckland. I suppose New Zealand ballet goers are not so well up in the classics as we are here, but it seems surprising that so much space is wasted in telling readers of "En Avant" the story of *Coppelia*. Nevertheless it is amusingly written. Although in a summary of "credits and discredits of the year 1954" the production of *En Avant* is listed as one of the year's disappointments, we advise the Editors to take heart—and on no account change the title to "En Arrière"!

ANTON DOLIN and **John Gilpin** were engaged as guest teachers by the Academy of Ballet in San Francisco recently. They had a record attendance. **Dolin** is writing a book on **Dame Adeline Genée** which will be ready in the autumn.

LES PATINEURS, a long standing favourite at Covent Garden, is to be produced by Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at Sadler's Wells. The first performance will be on April 23rd.

During the company's season **Andrée Howard** will appear as guest artist in her own ballet, *Selina*.

THE Mabel Ryan Award was awarded this year to **Vivian Dodds**, a pupil of **Dulcie Pyne** of Chingford. The adjudicator was **Dame Ninette de Valois**.

DIARIES have been produced to cover most people's interests, from the boy scout to the film fan, and now one is being prepared for balletgoers. The 1956 edition will be ready in mid-November and will cost about 5/6d. Fuller details will be announced later.

LUISA and **Antonio Triana** have been cast to appear in a Warner Brothers film, *Strange Lady in Town*. This father and daughter team will dance the farucca in the film, which stars **Greer Garson** and **Dana Andrews**.

GUEST Star dancers appearing in *Deep in my Heart*, film currently being shown in America, include **Tamara Toumanova**, **Gene** and **Fred Kelly**, **Ann Miller** and **Cyd Charisse**.

OUT-OF-WORK dancers are probably now anxiously awaiting developments of the wonderful scheme to open a factory for unemployed members of the entertainment profession. The administrators of the Artists' Pool of Industry organised a dinner dance and all star cabaret at the Cafe de Paris on March 27th, for which many top line artists gave their services, and all profits will go towards opening the first factory which will employ artists from all branches of the entertainment world. Artists will earn a living wage for casual unskilled work at the factory. They will be allowed time off for auditions, and may leave at 24 hours' notice to take an engagement in their own profession.

According to Equity's report for 1953 there were approximately 3,000 artists continually unemployed in the theatre, so there is obviously a great need for such a scheme.

Many donations have already been received to the fund, but many more are needed.



Marianne and Laszlo Nagy. (See paragraph below)

LASZLO and **Marianne Nagy**, the Hungarian brother and sister team who won the Pairs Skating Championship in the European Skating Championships held in Budapest recently, have to some extent to thank Hungarian dance teaching methods for their success. They attend the Budapest Ballet School where they receive ballet training from **Andras Jezsensky**.

BALLET MOTHERS and students all know the difficulty of making a professional-looking tutu for displays and exams. Several paper patterns have been issued in the past, but that just issued by **Weldon's** seems to me to be the most professional and authentic so far. The bodice is well cut and the skirt, instead of being clouds of tarlatan sewn on willy-nilly, giving the bunched effect we so often see, is made on to pants. Dancers who have wished for a detailed tutu pattern will be pleased to know about this.

MARGOT Fonteyn and **Michael Somes** are to appear between April 19th and May 2nd at the Finnish National Opera,

Helsinki, under the auspices of the British Council, where they will dance *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* with the Royal Swedish Ballet.

SOUTH America will have its first visit from members of the Sadler's Wells Ballet when **Violetta Elvin** and **John Field** dance at the Teatro Municipal, Rio de Janeiro, from April 28th to May 10th. Their repertoire will include *Giselle*.

BERYL Grey and **John Field** are appearing for a two weeks' season with the Royal Swedish Ballet in Stockholm. Their repertoire includes *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.

THREE months' leave of absence has been granted to **Nadia Nerina** and **Alexis Rassiné**—from April 12th to August 12th—so that they may give a recital tour throughout South Africa. Among their visits they will appear with the ballet company in Cape Town. They will return home in time to join the company before its fourth American tour.

Ballet As I See It — — IN CANADA by Fernau Hall

Escudero Prepares for New York

ONE of my reasons for going to Montreal was to see Vicente Escudero—who was appearing there for a week to polish up his programme in preparation for the New York season). I hurried straight from the station to Her Majesty's Theatre; and after the show I arranged with Escudero to have a talk with him the following day at 5 p.m.

When I arrived at the theatre next day I found a rehearsal in progress. Things went far from smoothly, and as time went on Escudero seemed to get more and more depressed. Obviously the main difficulty was that the show was being put on by two independent groups—on the one hand Escudero with his partner Carmita Garcia (who has been faithful to him for decades) and a young dancer Maria Marquez, and on the other hand a small group of gypsies from Barcelona, "El Bailete".

REHEARSAL

They were rehearsing the Sevillanas forming the finale of the show. Since this formed part of a Cuadro Flamenco—the traditional gypsy show in which one dancer after another gets up and does his "party piece", encouraged by the shouts and hand-clapping of the others—it was quite properly being staged by Escudero in a strongly *agitado* (gypsified) style, with complex and emphatic foot-stamping.

When Escudero sketched out a foot-rhythm, this was seized on with excitement by Carmita Garcia and Rosario Escudero: they mastered it very quickly, worked it up, and incorporated it into the framework of the Sevillanas. But the two boys in "El Bailete" seemed to find difficulty in picking up these enchainements, even though Rosario Escudero analysed them for their benefit slowly and with great patience.

At long last the rehearsal ended, and I was able to have my talk with Escudero. This was of great interest to me, for Escudero has done more than anyone to adapt the improvised gypsy flamenco of the caves and taverns to the theatre—which has its own different laws. I have had experience of a parallel process of adaptation in the field of Indian classical dancing, and this helped me to understand the magnitude of Escudero's achievement.

FASCINATING

It was fascinating to discuss with Escudero the relationship of the Flamenco dances of the

gypsies of Spain with the dancing of India, where the gypsies originated over a thousand years ago. Escudero told me of his own studies in the field of language: he has searched through Hindustani and Sanskrit dictionaries, and has found hundreds of words which have almost the same sound and meaning in Romany. He also told me of the great interest he took in the Indian dances shown by Uday Shankar, and of the use he has made of gestures from Indian dances in the dance *Siguriya Gitana*, which he created in 1944.

LITTLE MERIT

In working towards Indian dancing Escudero has shown a very sound instinct: the steps by which Kathak (the classical style of North India) gradually evolved into Flamenco can be studied in the dances of Tadzhikistan and Persia. But I could see little merit in Escudero's adaptation of Shankar's mudras: most of the time he simply took a rather awkward hand-position and held it, without making it part of the dance. He was unfortunate in his model: Shankar himself is what one might call an Indian modern dancer, adapting classical Indian mudras in his own manner, and in fact the mudras used in Kathak, with their delightfully fluid, calligraphic quality, are very well suited to the fast and complex foot-beats characteristic of both Kathak and Flamenco.

NOBLE CARRIAGE

Though Escudero is now long past his prime, it was a rewarding experience to see him in action on the stage. By ignoring the moments when he tried something which did not come off, one could see in his noble carriage and purity of style the quality which made it possible for him to take Flamenco all over the world and (along with Pastora Imperio) establish the artistic significance of this great classical style. (It is greatly to be regretted that Spanish dancing teachers use the word "classical" to describe a hybrid style bringing together some elements of the European classical technique and steps and arm movements from a variety of Spanish folk-dances; whatever the merits of this style, it is certainly not classical.)

LEADING SPIRIT

Rosario Escudero (no relation to Vicente) is the leading spirit in *El Bailete* and a young artist

with such fire, animation, intelligence and *duende* (the "demon" without which Flamenco cannot spring to life) that she charges the stage with electricity the moment she sets foot on it: here is an artist whose theatrical sense is so assured that she never put a foot, a hand or a facial expression

wrong. Because she has not allotted to herself major solos with separate billing on the programme, she has not yet attracted the attention she deserves from critics. (Such modesty is very rare in the theatre!). But it is easy to see that she will go a long way.



National Ballet of Canada

Ray Moller and Angela Leigh in a scene from Tudor's Gala Performance.

Television in Montreal

MONTREAL has something which I think is unique in the world today—a semi-independent television ballet company specialising in the production of television ballet, in the proper sense of the word—and the amount of specialised television ballet produced in Montreal would make producers and choreographers in other cities green with envy. The company directed by Ludmila Chiriaeff produces each month on an average one independent television ballet, one ballet as part of a weekly musical programme *Concert Hour*, and something like eight short choreographic versions of French-Canadian folk-songs. In addition there are other choreographers in Montreal—notably Heino Heiden and the modern-dance teacher Elizabeth Leese—who produce items for television independently of the Chiriaeff company.

The amount of new work produced by the latter company demands intensive rehearsals for long hours seven days a week, and must represent an almost intolerable strain on the dancers; but at least they have the satisfaction of earning their living doing the work for which they

have trained. A Fokine or a Tudor would go mad trying to produce choreography at this rate, but Ludmila Chiriaeff seems to thrive on it: she is a square peg in a square hole. She has roots in both Moscow and Berlin, and brings together the qualities of drive and fanatical determination which are to some extent characteristic of choreographers from both these capitals. Though of Russian origin she grew up in Berlin, where she had training from Muscovite teachers (in particular Alexandra Nicolaeva, but also Edwardova and Gsovsky); as a choreographer she was strongly influenced by Fokine, by Maudrik (of the Berlin Opera) and above all by Sabina Ress (who worked mainly in the field of operetta).

I had the good fortune to watch a whole day of rehearsal and performance, in the Montreal television studios of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, of a new television ballet *Les Tableaux d'une Exposition* (based on the famous suite by Mousorgsky), with choreography by Ludmila Chiriaeff and production by Jean Boisvert. (This was on Channel Z and intended for



Coleen Kenney, Earl Kraul and Marilyn Rollo dance the Czardas in the National Ballet Company of Canada's production of *Swan Lake*.

NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA

I could not have arrived at Toronto at a better time, for my visit coincided with the annual appearance of the National Ballet of Canada in its native city. In previous years it has played one week in Toronto, but this year it took a chance on a two-week season, with excellent results: most evenings the house was almost full, and this was also true of a week-day matinee, thanks to the hard work in audience organisation of the company's supporters in Toronto.

There were a great many things wrong with the various programmes, but these defects were of small importance compared with the emergence of Lois Smith as a great ballerina of international stature. This artist, now in her early twenties, with only three years' experience in serious ballet, has matured so rapidly that her Odette-Odile (inspite of serious faults of style) is the best in the world after Margot Fonteyn's. In fact she makes much the same devastating impact that Margot Fonteyn did in 1937—when Margot Fonteyn also had certain severe defects of style. Lois Smith has dramatic ability, intelligence, imagination, creative power, a strong technique and in fact all the qualities I demanded of the ideal ballerina (*Ballet Today*, February, 1955). Her Caroline in the difficult Tudor ballet *Jardin aux Lilas* is fully as good as any I have seen, and considerably better than that of the dancer who created the part: in this role (as in Odette-Odile) Lois Smith is hampered by stiff, insensitive hands, but within two years she should have brought her hands under control, and then the sky's the limit. The mystery remains: how was it possible for a Canadian dancer, without access to great Russian teachers or producers, to master the great romantic-lyrical style—the most difficult of all?

One partial answer is perhaps to be found in the fact that she has as partner and husband David Adams, a virile, graceful and intelligent danseur noble. With such a partner Lois Smith does not have to project all her moods into a vacuum, like most prima ballerinas: she gets an instant and sympathetic response to every action, and so is able to build up a mood throughout a scene without effort. Already the differences in characterisation between her Odette-Odile, her Queen of the Willis, and her Caroline are astounding for so

inexperienced an artist.

The gap between these two and the corps de ballet is even greater than that which separated a small group of soloists in the pre-War Vic-Wells (Margot Fonteyn, Robert Helpmann, Harold Turner, Pearl Argyle, June Brae) and the Vic-Wells corps de ballet. This gap represents a major weakness of the company.

Another very grave weakness is the fact that all the decors and costumes seem to be designed by Kay Ambrose, and show little or no feeling for cut, period, colour, atmosphere or composition. What is one to make of a tutu which springs from the waist and concentrates attention on a pair of plain white panties? Fortunately one ballet has satisfactory decor and costumes—*Jardin aux Lilas*; these are copied very closely from the original designs by Hugh Stevenson. (even though in the programme they are credited to Kay Ambrose).

The repertoire chosen by Celia Franca, director of the company, has been much criticised in Canada because it concentrates on a few old favourites—*Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Casse-Noisette*, *Les Sylphides*, *Coppelia*—almost to the exclusion of new ballets. That this is a fair criticism is proved by the success which the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has had with an opposite policy. But each to his last. I think Celia Franca has done well to concentrate on the sector where her own strength lies: the poor quality of the one Canadian ballet in the current repertoire (*Barbara Allen*), with choreography by Joey Harris makes one appreciate the good qualities of ballets like *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*; and Celia Franca must be given great credit for commissioning *Jardin aux Lilas* from Tudor. (In fact this latter production is by far the most homogeneous and generally successful in the repertoire: it is hard to believe that the dancers who show such a good sense of style and period in this ballet are the same ones who grin so vacuously in *Casse-Noisette*.) But Celia Franca's policy has the defect that further progress is difficult, now that nearly all the standard ballets have been incorporated in the repertoire.

Ballet in Canada has made enormous strides in the past few years. Schools are mushrooming (there are already 600 at least) and interest in ballet among the general public is growing very rapidly. Certain outstanding achievements (such as the dancing of Lois Smith and the television costumes) suggest that potentialities of Canadian ballet (as distinct from ballet in Canada) are very great. But I am very doubtful if these potentialities can be realized if ballet continues to be organised on present lines. This is a subject requiring a good deal of thought, and I hope to return to it later.

The Margot

Act



but her stay in this country was not destined to be a lengthy one; for two years later she had to return to the Orient, this time to live in Shanghai: here fortunately the late George Goncharov then held a school of ballet, and the young pupil's classes were able to be continued. Again in 1933 the Fonteyn entourage returned to England, but this time her stay was to be permanent; she was taken to Madame Astafieva to be enrolled as one of her pupils, for by this time ballet had been decided upon, as being the career for which she was intended. It was soon determined that she should be entered for an audition at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School; having been successful in her application, she set off one March morning in the spring of 1934 to attend the Sadler's Wells School for the first time.

A few months later Margot Fonteyn made her first appear-

ance with the Company, as the snowflake in *Casse-Noisette*; in October she was given her first individual role, that of the Young Master of Treginnis, in Ninette de Valois' *The Haunted Ballroom*, which had been given its premiere on April 3rd of that same year; Margot Fonteyn was to take over the small role that had been so well created by Freda Bamford; there were few eyebrows raised after her initial performance, in fact she returned a competent rendering and no more; perhaps there were a handful of people then, who, probably more by luck than judgment, foresaw her as a prima ballerina assoluta of today, but more likely than not they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Her next role of note was the dancing of the Mazurka in *Les Sylphides*; then as one of the cygnets in *Le Lac des Cygnes*, besides dancing a small role in Ashton's *Lord of Burleigh*.

ON the 23rd July 1954 the summer season of the Sadler's Wells Ballet at the Opera House, Covent Garden, was brought to its close; *Veneziana*, and the last acts of *Coppelia* and the *Sleeping Beauty* had been chosen for the final programme; Margot Fonteyn was to dance perhaps her greatest role, that of the Princess Aurora. Even before the conductor had completed the last bar of Tchaikovsky's score, an excited audience burst into rapturous applause; they were acclaiming not only a great ballet, but the many performances and achievements accomplished by a great ballerina, who had just completed twenty one years of loyal service to the Sadler's Wells organisation in particular, and the whole realm of ballet in general: since descending as an insignificant snowflake in the 1934 production of *Casse-Noisette*, she had risen to the zenith of perfection, like the stage by stage metamorphosis of the most iridescent butterfly from its embryonic chrysalis.

Dame Ninette de Valois paid tribute to those years of devotion, not only to her individual company but to all ballet, and invited Margot Fonteyn to speak a few words; Fonteyn replied that she would defer speechmaking till the advent of

her retirement. As we struggled out of the Opera House, vainly attempting to avoid the precipitous stampede into the foyer, where nightly the 'hat and coat' struggle is waged, there was perhaps an expression of relief, interwoven with gratitude and satisfaction, inscribed on each person's face, for we now knew that it was to be only au revoir, and not farewell to Fonteyn, as some had feared.

Unfortunately her retirement must come someday, but whenever it may fall, it will bring to a close a long chapter in English Ballet.

The story started in 1919, in the Surrey market town of Reigate, when a certain Peggy Hookham was born; for the first few years in the life of this child by no stretch of the imagination could she be termed that abhorred individual, the infant prodigy. She first studied dancing at the age of four with Miss Grace Bosustow, who ran a ballet school in Ealing; she remained taking classes at this school for nearly four years, at the end of which period her family had to go abroad; during their travels the family journeyed to both the United States, and to China, where they lived for some time in Hong Kong.

It was not until 1931 that the family returned to England;



Fonteyn Story

Prologue

A year later in 1935 Markova left the company, and as yet there was no one to fill the vacant throne of prima ballerina; several young dancers had succeeded in making names for themselves, yet none could really claim it automatically as their own; for besides the young Fonteyn, there were to be found in Pamela May and Pearl Argyle, two dancers who had had considerably more experience at this time; but her fate was to be decided by Frederick Ashton, who more than any other person has fashioned the lines for her genius to progress upon. He chose her to interpret the role of Young Bride in Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la Fée*; her performance on the first night was a miniature triumph, for Ashton had created a role that could not have been more fitted to her youthful temperament; Harold Turner, who is now appearing with the company as a guest artiste, besides filling an important position at the Sadlers

Wells School, was her partner for this ballet.

Three months later though she was to create a far more important role, for on February 11th 1936, Frederick Ashton conceived his work *Apparitions*, in which Fonteyn was to play the Woman in the Ball Dress; she is the idyllic fantasy of a young poet's dreamlike illusions; the ballet with Cecil Beaton's highly imaginative decor and Constant Lambert's clever orchestration of Liszt's music was an immediate success, and has since been revived several times.

All this time Margot Fonteyn's dancing was gaining both depth and maturity; she was fortunate in having in Ashton, a choreographer who could develop and fashion her performances to give their very best impression.

At the end of this same year she was to appear in yet another Ashton ballet; she was to play the role of the poor little flower girl in *Nocturne*, a ballet set to the music of Delius; Fonteyn's role as the



All the photographs in this feature are by Gordon Anthony.

On the opposite page, top left, Fonteyn is seen with Frederick Ashton in Nocturne, 1936.

Bottom right, in Apparitions, 1936.

On this page, above, in Les Rendezvous, 1935.

Left, with Robert Helpmann in Giselle, 1937.

pathetic tragic vendor created a deep impression on the audiences, and provided an excellent contrast to the flamboyant performance of June Brae as the rich girl; the ballet was one of Ashton's loveliest creations, and a revival of this work would be most welcome today.

The next important step in the graduation of the career of the youthful Fonteyn, was her portrayal of Giselle; she was still only seventeen years old, yet in spite of her youth, she was to follow in the footsteps of one of the greatest exponents of Giselle in the history of ballet, Alicia Markova; on that January night in 1937, she must have mused whether her progress had been perhaps a little too startling; however her performance was a triumph for one so young; though naturally there was room for much improvement, in the second act especially, when complaints were voiced that she lacked that necessary ethereal quality; however her rendering of *Giselle* today has dispelled any doubts we might have had then, for it is a role over which she has taken the greatest pains. Her performance as Giselle was one of the first great milestones in the shaping of her career, for it was her first complete principal role in one of the great classical ballets.

End of Part One

V.C.

PART TWO OF THIS SERIES
WILL BE IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Ballet For Beginners

You need not be chained to the barre from babyhood, says

JEAN SHAKESPEARE

ONE of the most surprising developments in ballet in recent years has been the increase in amateur dancing. Since the war ballet clubs have sprung up in all parts of the country, most of which have "dancing" members and put on shows from time to time. In London, amateur evening classes attract hordes of would-be dancers. Those held by the London Ballet Circle have increased tremendously in attendance and classes held at L.C.C. evening institutes for adult beginners have long waiting lists.

Of all the arts, ballet is the most exacting and can perhaps suffer the most in being attempted by amateurs. Professionally, its object is to give pleasure not to the performer but to the audience. Even so I do not think the amateur interest should be condemned.

WHAT HARM ?

Performances of amateur ballet are frowned on by large numbers of the profession, who feel that years of intensive training and a mastery of technique are necessary before a dancer is fit to perform in front of an audience.



Members of the London Ballet Circle receiving instruction from well known teacher Andrew Hardie (see page 17).

photo by S. M. Vaughan.

I would be the last to disagree with this idealistic point of view. But it is difficult to see what harm is done if performances are given amongst club members and their friends and both dancers and audience enjoy themselves. On

the contrary, much good has been done by ballet club shows in creating an interest in ballet in some provincial districts.

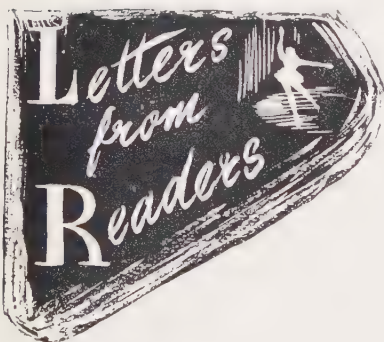
EXERCISE

A ballet class is of course a

means to an end. But to most of those who attend an amateur class the class is an end in itself. Many feel the need for some form of exercise, and find ballet more appealing than "keep fit". Others are balletomanes anxious to imitate, in however humble a manner, the feats performed by their favourite dancers—and incidentally to learn a few technical terms with which to colour their gallery discussions. They are delighted to be able to refer to so-and-so's ronds de jambe and someone else's développ , confident that they are using the right words.

DESIRE TO DANCE

There are also some who have always wanted to dance but were prevented from doing so in childhood. These, although they would probably feel too old to enrol in their local teacher's beginners' classes are pleased to find classes where an adult beginner is not out of place. A few have been known eventually to reach a professional standard. It is not always essential to be chained to the barre from babyhood in order to become a professional dancer.



I wonder if all dancers are aware of the L.C.C. classes for Modern Dance? To a classical dancer a half-hour in improvisation may be reminiscent of the film *Snake Pit*, but forget that. I watch Mr. Ernest Berk working with a class of trained and untrained people, keeping them all alive in movement to their own capacity bringing his considerable intellect and musical knowledge to this daily task, always different, welding these divergent elements into patterns sometimes oddly beautiful and always far, far more interesting than

anything I've seen in the Wells lately except parts of *Firebird*.

How gay and enjoyable too the American-Musical-style modern taken by Mr. Conrad. All this for 10/- a year in Stanhope Street.

Roma Heritage.

Flat 5, 47, Belsize Park, London, N.W.3.

'*Ballet Today*' seems to be the healthy breeding ground for true and unaffected criticism, for it does not now, and I hope never will tolerate the trifling dilettante, who creates an atmosphere from which stems so much of the misunderstanding shown by the general public.

Ballet has for so long been regarded as the 'hot house' form of art which cannot stand by itself, but must needs tap the strength of its more virile companions. It is indeed gratifying to see that '*Ballet Today*' is fiercely combating this deep and damaging misunderstanding of the Dance, and pointing out so resolutely the path along which Ballet must go if it is to survive, and remain a major art form. It

must cease looking into the past for its inspiration, and must strike out, breeding in the present and cultivating the future. Ballet must expand ever wider, taking in all that is good in other art forms and rejecting all that is useless, undaunted when its creations are startlingly unusual, caring only that what it creates is good Dance.

It is then up to us all, musicians, choreographers, designers, critics, and yes—even the admirers from the stalls and 'gods' to resolve to take our eyes from the dying past and fix them on the future, for there lies the answer and the hope for a fitter and healthier Ballet.

E. R. Aurant-Pasterick
190 Crayford Way, Crayford, Kent.

When "The Man who Loved Redheads" was shown in this district recently the audience tittered at Shearer and Hart on the screen; I gather it was the sight of a man in tights that amused them. Having lived in London for thirty years and

brought up to appreciate ballet, apart from my own training as a dance teacher, this audience reaction intrigued me. Why? the answer is surely that the choice of ballet subject (an excerpt from *The Sleeping Beauty*) was unsuitable.

Something less static with the danseur displaying the athletic qualities required of the male dancer (remember it is a British audience) would have better suited the "general release" public, a vast mass quite uneducated to classic ballet.

Donalda May.

26, Crabton Close Road,
Boscombe, Bournemouth.

THE Editor will be pleased to consider letters for publication on matters of general interest to ballet lovers. Letters should be brief and to the point, and should be addressed to 15, Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

Anonymous letters will not be considered, but the sender's name and address will be withheld from publication if requested.

Musician at the Ballet
 *
 * by
 * **MONTAGUE CALMAN** *

A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

I AM not suffering from an overdose of T. S. Eliot or Christopher Fry when I say that the most serious contribution to ballet recently was Michael Tippett's opera *The Midsummer Marriage* (The Royal Opera House).

Tippett's music in *The Midsummer Marriage* has a deep mysticism that may well be incompatible when married to the spoken word, but the dance is the ideal medium for expressing the seemingly intangible, and would be a happy partner for the marriage.

The three dances in Act 2, *The Earth in Autumn*, *The Waters in Winter* (rich in descriptive swirling music), and *The Air in the Spring* (dramatic ranges from high treble and deep bass) provide a powerful medium for dramatic choreography. If Tippett adapted the great choral episode into these ballets he would have a self-contained work; a contemporary and mystical *Polovtzi Dances* (as in Borodin's *Prince Igor*). I would like to see some of the long drawn out dance movements cut and reshaped and the noble choral piece (hymn to love) edited to form the climax. Then I am certain we should have an exceptionally fine work for ballet repertoire.

John Pritchard conducting *The Midsummer Marriage* proved that the Royal Opera House Orchestra could be dynamic and enthusiastic when given the right leadership. He aroused their feelings with the melodic line and held the audience with the colourful grovelling in the pathos of the superbly played cellos. And how the strings gave of their best in the uplifting crescendos, once again showing that ballet given the right composers and conductors can satisfy the most discriminating music lover.

NOT A FAILURE

We have been conditioned by publicity and allegedly expert books always to expect perfection in ballet from any country east of London. And then some are inevitably disappointed and lose any sense of perspective. This may account for the liverish response the recent season of the Yugoslav National Opera and

Ballet Company (The Stoll Theatre) received from many of my colleagues.

The Company was quite stupid to attempt *Romeo and Juliet* (Sergei Prokofiev) as their introduction to London. Yugoslavia is not in the forefront of cultural development and Shakespeare's original work itself defies even the most intellectually advanced minds when it comes to theatrical interpretation. Had the dancers been in complete sympathy with the theme the choreographer (her name was hidden in the programme among the minor lights) still had to cope with Prokofiev's score. Jumping and darting from *Symphonie Classique* to *Peter and the Wolf*, Prokofiev generally fails in this episodic score to ring out the subtle changes of drama in the ten scenes. And even worse the music does not, except for two beautiful moments, express the romantic fervour of the supreme sacrifice for love. But in the death of Mercutio, a pas seul with elan, the musical writing full of great drama portrayed every facet of death and dignity. (Milko Sparembek dancing this, drew every nuance from the musical drama).

Yet if the Yugoslavs failed to capture our hearts with the almost impossible *Romeo and Juliet* they certainly achieved this with the simplicity and beauty of two folk items, the ballet *The Devil in the Village*, and the opera, with a short ballet interlude, *Ero the Joker*.

THE DEVIL IN THE VILLAGE

The Devil in the Village, with music by Fran Lhotka a pupil of Dvorak, was new to London. Lhotka's music shows no influence from his master but is suggestive of Tchaikovsky and Borodin when it wanders from the folk idiom. He has a genuine feeling for comedy and the score provides movement by movement music for some superb mime by the village nit-wit. And unlike many contemporary composers of ballet music, Lhotka has adorned his score with figurations allowing for corresponding movements of the hands and body.

Similarly, in *Ero the Joker* the folk music themes by Jakov Gotovac cried out to be danced and Act 3 was an exciting

musical background for the Kolo dances.

BURNING VITALITY

It would be wrong to leave the impression that the Yugoslavs only succeeded with their folk music, for after initial difficulties at the first performance, they worked wonders with *The Polovtzi Dances* (in the opera *Prince Igor*). I saw both the first and last performances of Igor and was completely captivated by the dynamic savagery of the dancing. The turgid, yet polished playing of the orchestra and the theatrical impact of the complete dance was a tonic after the dullness so often seen in London today.

If we are to advance culturally we must continually compare our own standards with those of other countries. Impresario Peter Daubeny is to be congratulated in bringing over this and the many other foreign companies. Not all of us can afford world tours!

GUEST CONDUCTORS

Nothing pleases a critic more than to see improvements after he has pinpointed the faults. I have criticised Covent Garden's lack of ballet conductors and the inevitable dullness that automatically follows from this restriction. Now the orchestra pit sees many new batons in different hands.

Guest conductor Anatole Fistoulari revitalised *Le Lac des Cygnes*. His was not a detached view of the proceedings. Fistoulari went right into the essence and beauty of this lovely score,

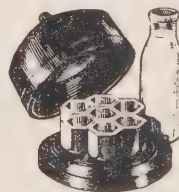
and worked on the delicate fabric of romantic sound. Avoiding vulgarity (except from occasional raucous brass) he produced a true Tchaikovsky loveliness. A pleasant change! And it was interesting to note how the dancers themselves seemed aware of the spring cleaning down in the orchestra pit.

Musically the most exciting performance at Covent Garden was Arthur Bliss's *Checkmate*. The Master of the Queen's Music, himself, conducted this dynamic work and gave a regal rendering. From the sombre, wonderfully dark shading of the opening until the chilling climax at the final curtain, Bliss's score keeps the nerves on edge. He, as the guest conductor, brought out from the players all the dramatic nuances of his work, and the brilliant athletic idiom was vividly performed. It was a great performance of one of Britain's outstanding ballets.

It is often said we have to pay for our joys. Following onto the scintillating performance by the Covent Garden orchestra of *Checkmate* was *Ballet Imperial*. This ballet has for its music the G major No. 2 piano concerto by Tchaikovsky. Without going into my dislike for Balanchine using this concerto for dance, I even now bristle with indignation over the orchestral performance. The brass was ragged, and occasionally flat, the strings stodgy and heavy, and the general ensemble totally out of keeping with the romantic concerto. My programme told me that it was the 110th performance of the ballet at Covent Garden. As I sat and listened I began to wonder whether I was not seeing all these performances in one evening! Robert Irving was the conductor.

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By JAY NORMAN

—Part Seven—

Sketches by JUDAH

Digest History of Ballet

THE foundations of British Ballet were laid in the years between the two world wars, when "The Association of Operatic Dancing"—later "The Royal Academy of Dancing"—was formed in 1920 under the presidency of Madame Adeline Genée.

MARIE RAMBERT

In 1930, Marie Rambert, a product of the Russian Imperial School at Warsaw and of Jaques Dalcroze, and founder of a school in London, formed the Ballet Club at the Mercury Theatre at Notting Hill Gate. Here, on this tiny stage, many dancers, now famous, created their first roles, among them Pearl Argyle, Diana Gould, Harold Turner and William Chappell. Here, too, both Antony Tudor and Frederick Ashton made their first ballets. Among the Tudor ballets of this period were: *The Planets* (1934) and *Jardin Aux Lilas* (1936). Ashton's contribution included *Foyer de Danse* (1932) and *Les Masques* (1933). After the formation of Ballet Rambert, Tudor created *Dark Elegies* (1937), perhaps his most famous ballet. Other choreographers who were first given opportunities by Madame Rambert were Andrée Howard, who reached her peak later in *La Fete Etrange* (1940) and *Lady Into Fox* (1949), Frank Staff and Walter Gore. Among the designers who were given invaluable experience at the Mercury was Sophie Fedorovitch.

During the war, good work was done by Chamber ballet

companies, notably the Ballet Guild and the London Ballet.

NINETTE DE VALOIS

Ninette de Valois, who had left Diaghilev's company in 1926 to open an Academy of Choreographic Art, first presented performances of ballet in 1928, in association with Lilian Baylis. In 1930, the Camargo Society was formed by Edwin Evans and P. J. S. Richardson and in 1933 the society's repertoire was incorporated into that of the Vic-Wells. In 1931 de Valois closed her academy to open a school at Sadler's Wells Theatre, where the Vic-Wells Ballet gave its first performance in 1931. In the early days the company owed much to Markova who, until the rise of Margot Fonteyn, took the leading roles from 1932-35, and to Constant Lambert, conductor and composer. During the war the company toured widely and appeared at the New Theatre, returning to Sadler's Wells in 1945 before moving to Covent Garden the following year.

During the first ten years of the company Frederick Ashton had almost unique opportunities of creating ballets for its repertoire and to these years belong *Les Rendezvous* and *Les Patineurs* (1937) and *Horoscope* (1938). In this period, too, de Valois produced one of her most outstanding works: *The Rake's Progress* (1935). *Job*, an equally remarkable work, based on Blake's *Illustrations for the Book of Job*, had been created for the Camargo Society in 1931. Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann had now become the first Prima Ballerina and Premier Danseur of an English company.

ASHTON

On moving to the Royal Opera House the Sadler's Wells Ballet gave up its pioneering experiments and settled down to carry the name of British ballet to every part of the Western world. The company consolidated its position in this country by revivals of the Russian classics and, when opportunity arose, the production of new works. Perhaps the most outstanding new ballets have been Ashton's *Symphonic Variations* (1946) and *Daphnis and Chloe* (1951). In the new setting Fonteyn matured into Prima Ballerina



Athletic streamlined American dancer.

Assoluta and a number of talented soloists emerged from the Sadler's Wells school. The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, a junior group, was formed in 1946. Among other companies, most of which lasted for a short time only, the Festival Ballet was launched by Anton Dolin in 1950, from the Markova Dolin Ballet, and first appeared at the Stoll Theatre in that year.

There is no doubt that the position of British ballet to-day is almost entirely due to the foresight, energy and genius of one woman—Dame Ninette de Valois.

AMERICAN BALLET AND TUDOR

Ballet as an adjunct to opera and in the form of dramatic pantomime was seen in the United States (in New York) as early as the middle of the eighteenth century and in the following century famous Italian and French dancers, such as Taglioni and Elssler, appeared in the city. Early in the present century Adeline Genée came to New York followed by other dancers of international repute, including Pavlova and Diaghilev's Ballet Russe. In 1919 Fokine opened a school in New York and in 1933 Colonel de Basil arrived with his company. From this date sufficient interest was aroused to establish the lasting popularity of ballet in the States. The outbreak of World War II brought many more dancers, companies and teachers from Europe.

BALANCHINE

Of the large number of small companies formed about this time the two most important were "Ballet Theatre", founded in 1940 under the direction of Richard Pleasant and Lucia Chase, and "Ballet Caravan", founded in 1936 by Lincoln Kirstein, later to become "The New York City Ballet" under the direction of Kirstein and George Balanchine. Balanchine, a product of the Maryinsky School at St. Petersburg, worked for Diaghilev for several years before emigrating to America in 1939, where he opened a school of American ballet. Balanchine as a choreographer is the cause of much dissension between critics and balletomanes. Although his work is based on the classical alphabet it rarely reflects the Russian influence of his early training, and he has developed a neo-classicism to suit the athletic, streamlined elegance of the American dancer, often using existing symphonic music in a literal, rhythmic manner. Some of his best known ballets, since working in America, have been: *Ballet Imperial*, *Serenade*, *Night Shadow* and *Orpheus*. Among leading dancers of the company are Maria Tallchief and Nicolas Magallanes.

"Ballet Theatre" has enjoyed the services of a number of outstanding dancers, including André Eglevsky, Igor Youskevitch and Nora Kaye, with Antony Tudor as its chief choreographer. Since its inception the company's fortunes have fluctuated considerably. In addition to the works of Tudor and Jerome Robbins' *Fancy Free*, its best works have undoubtedly been those based on American folk themes, such as Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*.

MAJOR TRAGEDY

In many ways Tudor has proved one of the most significant figures in modern Western ballet. Receiving his early training and experience with Marie Rambert he emigrated to America in 1939, after several attempts to run his own company in London. For "Ballet Theatre" he created, among other ballets, *Pillar of Fire* (for Nora Kaye), *Romeo and Juliet* and *Undertow*. From the earliest days, when he created *Lilac Garden*, *Dark Elegies* and *The Planets*, his work has been

—To Page 20



Lady into Fox



FESTIVAL BALLET MUST NOT FALL

The International Ballet found the going too hard, and, for the moment at any rate, has disbanded.

lent upon some other stages. Their *Symphony for Fun* is fun—for them as well as for us. And whatever the programme, Festival Ballet has danced, not only with grace, but with a good grace.

The small but important Ballet Rambert keeps going, but only heaven and Marie Rambert know how.

HOSPITABLE

The company, under the leadership of Anton Dolin, has created its own artists. It has been unfailingly hospitable to world-wide guest stars. Danilova, Toumanova, Kovach and Rabovsky are names that leap readily to mind in this connection.

They have been as happy to receive new talent as to present artists of established reputation. They have created new audiences, and they have held their tried and faithful friends.

Time and time again their vigour has rekindled my own lively pleasure in Ballet, and I have never gone away feeling that I was bidden to a banquet but fobbed off with a snack, which is so often one's lot with other companies.

It will be a bad day for the trend of ballet in this country if, for lack of official co-operation, Festival Ballet should fall.

It is to be hoped that the Arts Council will consider seriously the problem of the itinerant company which fulfils the double function of giving the provincial tax-payer something for his money and acting as a foil for their two major shop-window companies, the senior and junior Sadler's Wells Ballets.

But, policy apart, how sorry one would be to see Festival Ballet go down.

ALERT AND REVERENT

I have spent some happy evenings watching their *Sylphides*—when Markova was with them—*Giselle*, and *Prince Igor*. Their rough and ready *Petroushka* had vitality and was not without a certain chancy charm. The company's attitude to the classics was alert and reverent—one never caught the feeling of heavy boredom that is so sadly preva-

be. Therefore a spirit of youth and hopefulness pervades its vigorous performances, which is a happy thing to watch.

NO CHALLENGE

Artistically it offers no challenge to the Wells. Its greatest need has been a man of taste at the helm, lacking which, its presentations have fallen below the high standard of its dancing. But it is not this that has brought about its present plight, for Festival Ballet can fill its halls and its theatres.

It is the high cost of presenting ballet which lies at the root of its troubles, and of the troubles of any company that is not State supported.

No matter the gate, the kitty of the private enterprise concern is perpetually empty.

FESTIVAL Ballet, that talented, friendly, gallant company, is in high water and in deadly danger of breaking up.

This would be a sad loss to the world of Ballet—not the least to the State-run company at Covent Garden.

Every ballet company needs a competitor if it is not to become provincial and smug, and Festival Ballet, while it had neither the home-establishment nor the twenty-odd-year tradition of the Wells, does at least afford it a basis for comparison.

Festival Ballet is as international in its composition as the Wells is national. Particularly strong in its male dancers—in which the Wells is particularly weak—it gathers its artists wherever it comes upon them and sees to it that they are given a chance, no matter who or what they may

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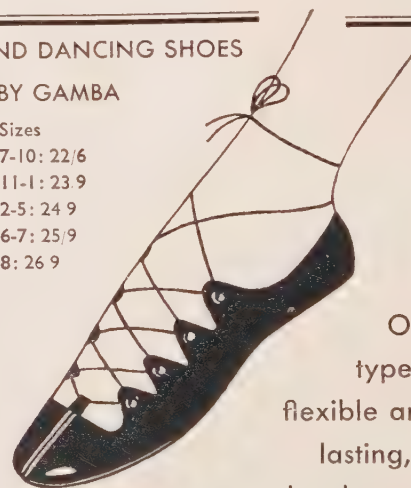
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Books

Diaghilev. By Arnold Haskell. (Victor Gollancz. 18s).

Only a few weeks before his death, bidding farewell until the autumn season to his company assembled on Covent Garden stage, Diaghilev said, "For the first time in our whole career we have an uninterrupted series of engagements fixed." During the twenty years of the Ballets Russes he had never known security, yet he had enriched music, painting and the theatre beyond all measure; and almost the whole world of ballet, as we have it today outside Russia, owes its existence to him. Financial success did not interest him, he never stooped to petty economies, all that mattered was the artistic goal. He depended on wealthy friends and patrons for the wherewithal for his company. Sometimes they failed him. Then only by the most desperate efforts did he manage to ring the curtain up and conceal the fact that there were bailiffs in the theatre.

He gathered around him the most gifted dancers, choreographers, musicians and painters of the day. He was always a little in advance of his time, and though he played no active creative role, he stimulated and inspired, and it was under his guiding hand that the masterpieces of ballet were created. He never sought any credit for himself, and when asked what was his share in it all, replied, "I suppose you might say that I take care of the lighting". It is true that he took a great interest in this side of the mechanics of the theatre, and would spend long hours in the empty dust-sheeted auditorium, trying out effects and lighting the crease out of a backcloth.

Over 140,000 people visited the recent Diaghilev Exhibition, proving that interest in him, twenty five years after his death, increases rather than diminishes: though this is the length of time it usually takes for a deceased celebrity to become out of fashion. Many people, as they passed through those fabulous rooms filled with the almost legendary original designs for famous ballets, with letters and books, portraits and statuettes, costumes and programmes, everything so full of special meaning, must have wished they knew more about the man to whom this all paid homage.

Arnold Haskell's biography, written in collaboration with Walter Nouvel and first published twenty years ago, will answer this wish, for it gives a very full, understanding and unbiassed picture of the great Serge Diaghilev and the twenty years of his Ballets Russes. It has been largely re-illustrated.

Ballet. By Arnold Haskell (Penguin Books, 2s. 6d.)

This is the latest revised edition of what must be the most popular book on ballet ever written, and

which was first published in 1938.

The chapters on the history and aesthetics of the art remain as before, the main changes are in the contemporary ballet scene, and in the examples chosen for a practical application of the chapter on the aesthetics of the ballet.

The photographs are nearly all new. The decorations by Kay Ambrose remain.

P.C.

Discs

THERE are one or two brightly shining stars in this month's sky and I am pleased to include Lander's romantic *Printemps a Vienne* for the Paris Opera Ballet. Its gaiety and lightness of touch its freshness, sparkle and delicate colouring were entrancing.

And here to refresh your memory until this great French company returns, is Schubert's *Second Symphony*, Phillips ABL 3001, with the R.P.O. guided by the genius of Beecham. It cannot fail to please—nor the *First Symphony* on the reverse—and the recording is good.

I cannot praise too highly Columbia's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, 33CX1175, with Peter Pears as narrator and Markevitch conducting the Philharmonia. Young and old alike, will learn a lot from it in a most entertaining way. Ashton used this music of Britten's for his recent *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*, which has much improved since its first night. On the other side, Anda and Siki are the pianists in a fine *Carnival of the Animals*. An excellent disc.

Two very well played and recorded discs come from Parlophone—particularly Turina's *Danzas Fantasticas* and three of Granados' *Danzas Espanolas*, PMD 1018, which Lopez, Antonio and other visiting dancers have often used. Schuchter gets the atmosphere of Turina's pieces which are well worth sampling. Braithwaite's conducting of the Covent Garden Orchestra, gives us an attractive record of the ballet music from *Le Cid* and *Scenes Alsaciennes*, PMC 1013. The former was used by Celia Franca for *Bailamos*, and de Lutry for *Les Etoiles*.

Jean Babilée's *Till Eulenspiegel* is the most recent we have seen to Richard Strauss' work. There are two this month from which to choose—HMV.ALP 1208 with Furtwangler conducting, or Telefunken LGX 66032 with Mengelberg. I found Furtwangler a

little heavy at times, whereas Mengelberg seemed more flowing, more staccato when necessary and lighter. The coupling may decide you—HMV. has Ashton's *Don Juan*—remember how attractive Moira Shearer was as the Young Wife—while Telefunken has *Tod und Verklarung*, Krauss conducting, which Inglesby used in *Everyman*.

Pacific 231 (Honegger) is not often heard but is included here with *Bolero* and *La Valse* played by the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra with Ansermet, Decca LXT 5004. He is not on top form—*La Valse* lacks lilt, contrast and excitement, whereas with his own orchestra on LXT 2896, he gave a far superior performance. The surface of the present disc suffers from crackling.

Excerpts from two popular ballets, *Coppelia* and *Sylvia*, by the Lamoureux Orchestra and Fournet, Phillips NBR 6005, are given typical French renderings. They will meet well the needs of balletgoers who want a general reminder. French orchestras also give a good account of the ballet music from *Faust* and from *Marouf, The Cobbler of Cairo*, Phillips NBR 6000. Fournet carries along the *Faust* ballet with a lively and easy performance, which has been given some thought. So has *Marouf*—a work rarely heard nowadays but nevertheless it has its admirers. The recording of both discs is good.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's rendering under Golschmann of the *Faust Ballet* music, Capital CTL 7078, to me seemed pedestrian and lacking lightness, added to which the recording is somewhat rough. The same rather applies to HMV.ALP 1219, Cantelli's interpretation of Franck's *Symphony—Lifar's Passions*. It is dull and the surface a bit noisy. Andre's performance, LGX 66030 which I reviewed a short time ago is definitely preferable.

Malko and the Philharmonia do not get the virility of Beethoven into the *Leonora No. 3*, the *Coriolan* and the *Creatures of Prometheus* Overtures, HMV. DPL 1061. Tudor used the first two in his ballet *La Gloire*. The third is part of Viganò's ballet of 1801, the music specially composed by Beethoven. De Valois chose it for one of her earlier ballets—recording satisfactory.

However Beethoven's greatness is lain before us by Furtwangler in the *Fifth Symphony*, HMV.ALP 1195—the first two movements are particularly fine. It was to this score that Jane Laouste created her ballet on the life of Beethoven.

B.C.

Cont. from Page 16

Digest History of Ballet

outstanding for a thorough understanding of the importance and nature of classicism and the value of the techniques of "free" movement in dramatic themes. He is the only choreographer who has so far merged the two techniques with skill and taste to produce a satisfying theatrical work of art. That he has produced nothing comparable to his early works in recent years may be due to a number of causes, but not the least one might perhaps put the lack of understanding of European classicism in the material at his disposal. That he has never returned to this country to work must be considered a major artistic tragedy. His choreography would seem to point a way to the future—a way between the unlimited exploitation of point dancing and the limitations of the "free" dance.

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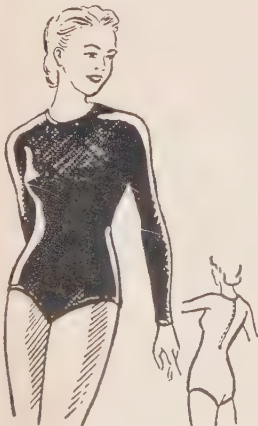
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Ballet Diary

Viola Elvin

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

- March**
30 *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Rinaldo and Armida, Symphonic Variations, Les Patineurs*
31 *Ballabile, Symphonic Variations, Mam'zelle Angot*
- April**
1 *Variations on a Theme of Purcell, Madame Chrysantheme, Mam'zelle Angot*
2 (mat) *Swan Lake (Elvin, Somes)*
2 (eve) *Les Patineurs, Madame Chrysantheme, Daphnis and Chloe*
4 *Les Patineurs, Les Sylphides, Daphnis and Chloe*
5 *Ballabile, Les Sylphides, Madame Chrysantheme*
6 *Mam'zelle Angot, Les Sylphides, Job*
7 *Coppelia (Nerina, Blair)*
9 (mat) *Coppelia (Beriosova, Chatfield)*
9 (eve) *Coppelia (Fifield, Shaw)*
11 *Swan Lake (Nerina, Rassine)*
12 *Sylvia (Fonteyn, Somes)*
13 *Les Sylphides, Rinaldo and Armida, Madame Chrysantheme*
14 *Sylvia (Elvin, Chatfield)*
15 *Les Sylphides, Rinaldo and Armida, Madame Chrysantheme*
16 (mat) *Sylvia (Fonteyn, Somes)*
16 (eve) *Sylvia (Elvin, Chatfield)*
19 *Sylvia (Grey, Chatfield)*
20 *Checkmate, Madame Chrysantheme, Tricorne*
21 *Coppelia (Beriosova, Blair)*
22 *Checkmate, Madame Chrysantheme, Tricorne*
23 (mat) *Sylvia (Grey, Chatfield)*
26 *Sylvia (Beriosova, Chatfield)*
29 *Les Sylphides, Madame Chrysantheme, Homage to the Queen*
30 (eve) *Coppelia (Linden, Blair)*

Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at Sadler's Wells

- April**
12 *Dances Concertantes, Rake's Progress, Café des Sports*
16 (mat) *Coppelia (Miller, Britton)*
19 *Dances Concertantes, Blood Wedding, Selina*
23 (mat) *Dances Concertantes, Les Patineurs, Pineapple Poll*
28 *Les Sylphides, The Rake's Progress, Beauty and the Beast, Les Rendezvous*
30 *Les Patineurs, Selina, Café des Sports*

Ballet Workshop at the Mercury

- March**
27 *Fanciulla dei Coralli, Palisades, Balletta da Camera*

Ballet Rambert on tour

weeks commencing :

- March**
21 *Connaught Theatre, Worthing*
28 *Coliseum Theatre, Harrow*

- April**
25 *White Rock Pavilion, Hastings*



writes her usual

monthly column

FOR me, as probably for most other ballet dancers, the greatest excitement and satisfaction of my career comes with the appearance in a new role.

There are two types of new roles for a dancer. Roles in which another has previously appeared and which the present artist now dances in turn, that is, repertory roles or revivals, and those roles which are completely new and which are expressly created for an artist.

There is a different approach to learning these two categories of roles. In learning a part from a ballet in the repertory, or in a work being revived, the artist has numerous examples of former performances which he might examine and learn from. He has teachers who can relate their impressions on the performances of other dancers. Often, he even has books which might contain some interesting thoughts and critical comment. In creating a really new role, however, there is scarce precedent to look back to and the artist is more or less left to his own devices and those of his choreographer and artistic counsel.

I find it difficult to state which category of role I consider to be the greater challenge. It is a very hard test to follow another dancer in a role he or she made famous, and it is a great achievement to succeed in bringing one's own personality across when performing it. And perhaps the greatest achievement here is to find oneself acclaimed as having made of an old role one quite new and individual.

In creating a new role I look for a different type of satisfaction. Provided the choreographer and dancer understand each other well, artistically speaking, dance movement can be moulded into original and quite individual shapes. All dancers have particular points which lend themselves to artistic exploitation by a sympathetic choreographer. The result, even if the complete work should not be well received, is usually exciting and particularly satisfactory for both artist and public.

It would therefore seem that, in order to be able to develop fully, no dancer of talent should lack the opportunity to re-create where others had created before him and of creating entirely anew.

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AN understanding of the different movements in ballet is necessary not only to the ballet student but also to any spectator who wishes to approach ballet with real appreciation. No one, I think, would contest this. Then of how much greater importance is it that teachers should understand them!

Unfortunately, the understanding of many teachers is often limited. Even more frequently, instructors suffer from inability to explain *why* certain effects can be better obtained by following definite rules. They don't even always know the rules, so how can they explain them?

Madame Legat implicitly believes that all the technical movements of ballet can be proved according to laws of physical science and natural philosophy. She claims that she has never yet told a pupil *how* to achieve a difficult feat without obtaining the desired result. "I have enabled boys and girls to do things which seemed to them quite impossible", she says, "and this, very often after they had been fruitlessly trained for years by other teachers. But I never give an instruction without being able to explain the exact scientific reason, stage by stage, for every part of the proceeding. Therefore it always works out, like a mathematical problem that has been tackled correctly".

There are teachers who deny the necessity of learning these rules, relying upon example and practice alone for the achievement of perfection. This does sometimes prove fruitful, but only with pupils who have an exceptional natural instinct for dancing. Even then, any skill acquired can easily be lost if for some reason the student is obliged to stop dancing for a time. On the other hand, some unfortunate pupils are compelled to concentrate for months on end upon one or two movements until the so-called "perfection" is reached, and having struggled through such a hard, painful, uninspired tuition, they have completely missed the joyous spirit of dancing; in fact they may appear more clumsy and stiff than they did when they started.

On the other hand, if a rule has been properly learnt and imprinted on the memory by means of a logical explanation it can be applied at any moment with immediate results.

In the pirouette, as I explained in my last article (it should be remembered that there are many different kinds of pirouette, but the basic rule is always the same) the dynamic impetus comes from the arms and shoulders. There-

fore épaulement is of the utmost importance.

Very often ballet steps are acquired by mere imitation on the part of the pupils, and when they are ignorant of the laws which govern these movements, they are at a loss the moment there is no example to imitate. And even then they need a very quick eye and constant practice.

The way Madame Legat explains the 'geometry' of the pirouette is as follows:

1. Imagine your body as if it were enclosed in a transparent (and invisible) elipse, with a line passing down the exact centre, from the crown of your head. Thus your body is cut in half, as it were, with one part on either side of the line, and whatever position either half takes in movement, the weight must be evenly distributed so that both sides balance.

2. The leg which has its foot on the ground represents the pivot; the other leg defines the form of the pirouette. It may be high or low; it may be placed on the ankle of the supporting leg; it may be stretched out à la seconde; but the rotation itself is supplied by the impetus of the arms, with a little help given to the arms by the torso.

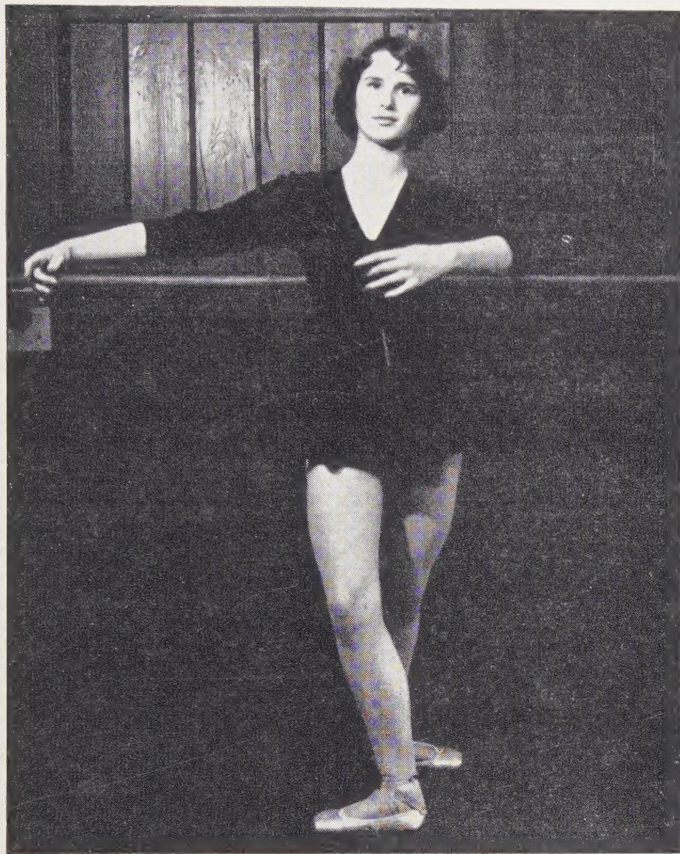
3. This little help from the torso is of the utmost importance, since it is essential that the arms and torso should act as a single entity. If the arms are not held firmly at the shoulder end, but loosely, in the manner of a whip, without involving torso support, a flabby pirouette will result, and it may not even be possible to achieve a full rotation. ("Try spinning a coin with the fingers, giving an equal momentum from both sides", says Madame Legat. "You will see what I mean. The pirouette should be just as clean as the spin of a correctly balanced penny")

4. Madame Legat's own method is to make the pupils start by learning the difference between 'en dedans' and 'en dehors'. "If a turn is taken on the right leg and one rotates to the right, or on the left leg and one rotates to the left, the pirouette will be *en dedans*, which means 'inside'. Whereas, if the turn is on the right leg and the rotation is towards the left, or on the left leg and the rotation is towards the right, that is a *pirouette en dehors*, which means 'outside'."

5. Having described the function of the legs in the pirouette in our last article, let us now concentrate on the arms. In the *pirouette en dedans*, when the right foot is in front, the upper part of the body must be well

TO BALLET

: The second article in a series based on interviews with N. Nicolaeva-Legat and written by Elisabeth H. C. Corathiel



planted with the right shoulder turned to the front in line with the foot, and the right arm placed on the level of the chest in a semi-circular position, while the left arm should be in open position level with the shoulder—that means, the right arm should be in second and the left in fourth when the foot is raised to the ankle. At the same time, the left arm should give the impetus and move forward to join the right arm, which gives a slight inclination to the right, but not with the same force as the left, only with a gentle, slight opening. (Remember, in this case, your right is on the inside of the circle which you are to transcribe, while the left is on the outside; therefore the left makes a wider sweep and needs more impetus).

6. Correspondingly, for the *pirouette en dehors*, taken from the fourth position *croisé*, the same rule will apply in reverse. From the same angle of the body it will be the left foot which will be in front and the right behind; but as the right foot will be raised and placed on the front of the left ankle, it will be the right hip which must be raised and the waistline drawn in. The rotation being taken on the left (front) foot to the right, it is still the left arm that should give the strongest movement, as the rotation will

again be to the right—and vice versa.

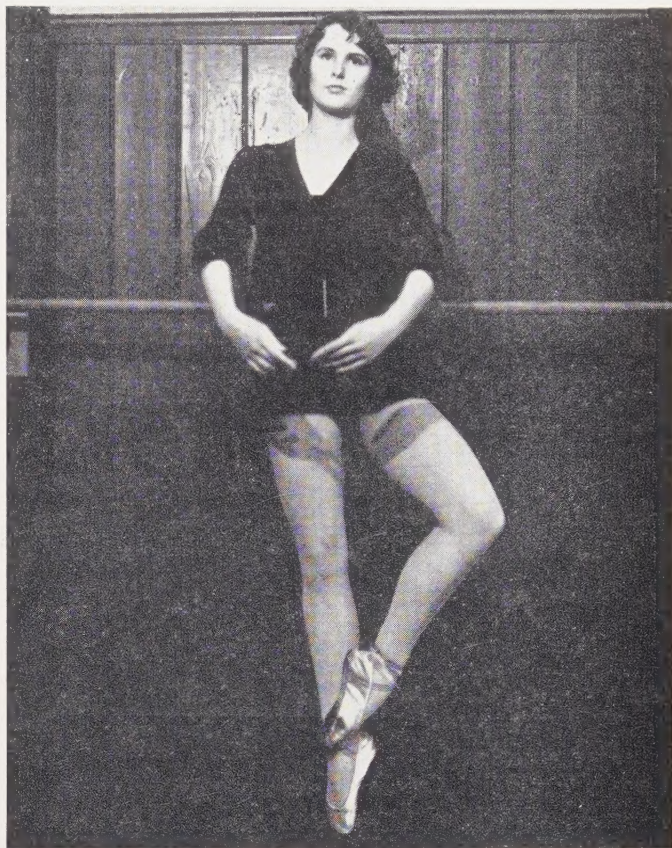
7. The head position is also very important. In both *en dedans* and *en dehors* pirouettes a rapid tossing of the head is essential. While the body is turning the head must be kept steady, always fixed towards the front until the very last moment—and this can only be achieved by a very rapid twist of the head in the final second of the rotation's completion.

There are, of course, exceptions to every rule, and it is impossible to deal with every kind of pirouette in the space allowed for a single article. This is where the teacher's own intuition, and his or her solid basic experience, comes in—for the teacher must be capable of forming—and logically explaining, new "rules within rules", which are a matter of personal perception.

PIROUETTE

Fig. 1 (top left) shows the end of the preparation for a pirouette *en dehors*; Fig. 2 (top right) shows the position during the turn, and Fig. 3 the finish of the turn.

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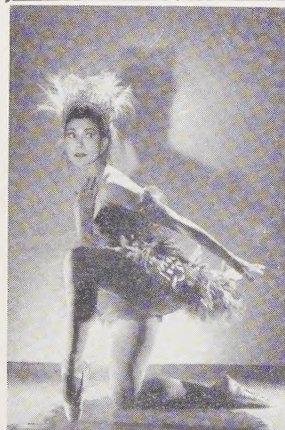
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